Notebook Series -- Notebooks by Experimenters Other Than Edison
Kinetophone and Kinetoscope Experiments -- A. M. Kennedy Books
Notebook, N-14-01-21

This notebook was used by Absalom M. Kennedy during January-May 1914 as a record of experimental work on kinetophone and phonograph recordings. At the beginning of the book are notes on voice recording tests to determine optimal stage directions, positions for actors and props, backgrounds, costuming, and stage size, as well as to establish procedures for testing exposure, focus, sound, and lighting before filming. Also included are entries describing changes made to kinetophone parts or procedures, such as amplifier lever arms and film developing formulas. Near the end of the book is an entry bearing the title "Record of Recording Quality of Actors Voices from Mr. Edison's Record," followed by additional entries containing evaluations of male and female singers at the Century Opera House. Employees who participated in the evaluations include Kennedy, O. Bing, Clarence B. Hayes, and Alexander N. Pierman. Numerous instructions, comments, and suggestions by Edison appear throughout the book. The front cover is labeled "Kinetophone Studio Work." The pages are unnumbered. Approximately 25 pages have been used.

KINETOPHONE STUDIO
WORK.

① Preliminary Tests and Information.

Report of 1/21/14 on Foreign Studio recording contains
"Voice recording tests should be made of all prospective actors and those who do not record well should not be used for Kinetophone subjects." "A record book should be kept embodying the result of these tests and these results should also guide the stage director in placing his actors; those with the weaker voices being, as far as possible, placed nearer to and more nearly facing the recording horn".

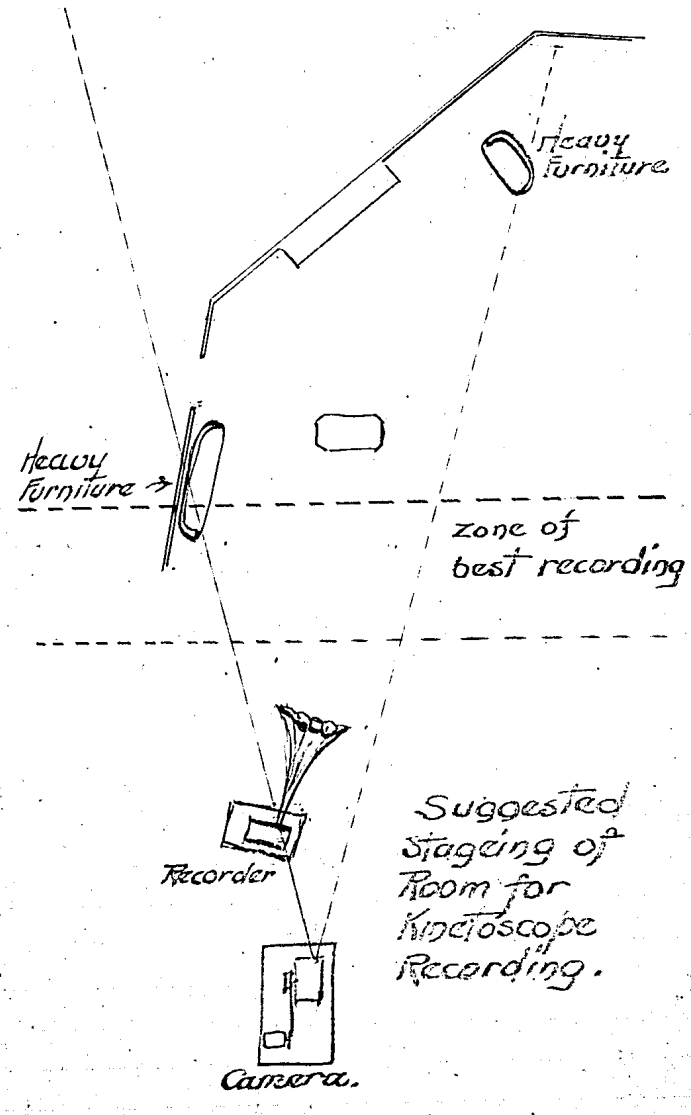
To this Mr. Edison added the following note:
"Test records of an actors voice by reciting something from a book, then the record is to be reproduced in presence of at least 3 persons who do not know what is recorded and

[1]

who are totally ignorant of the subject matter". "If all 3 get 100(%) of all the words, then the actor can be used." E.

Further from above report:
"Actors should be instructed to speak as distinctly as possible and louder than for ordinary acting and should as far as possible face the recording horn."

"The width of stage should be small so that the recorder may be as close to the actors as possible and a good lip movement will be seen. Apparent breadth may be given the stage by the use of heavy furniture at the ends and by the use of "perspective" angles in the settings as shown in attached sketch". "The stage may be made as deep as required provided the speaking actors be kept in the foreground near the recorder."



Suggested Staging of Room for Kinetoscope Recording.

"When the stage is set up before any Kinetophone subject is taken, trial strips of film should be taken to determine the proper exposure and focus. At least some of the actors should be in this trial take in the costumes they are to wear.

"Before taking any subject in a new place, trial records should be made with the recorder to determine the acoustic properties of the place so that any echoes or other extraneous sounds may be eliminated."

On which Mr. Edison notes:
"The Echoes become more disturbing the further the actors are from the horn but canvas and carpets stop it."
"Echoes in room, if bad can be eliminated by using scenery painted on canvas floor & stage, thick woven carpet & canvas sides to room."

BACKGROUNDS.

"Backgrounds should be dark. Painted scenery should be in dark colors, plain or with a small, repeated figure. Sepia or an equivalent brown makes an excellent background color". "A skyline background should be avoided".

LIGHTING.

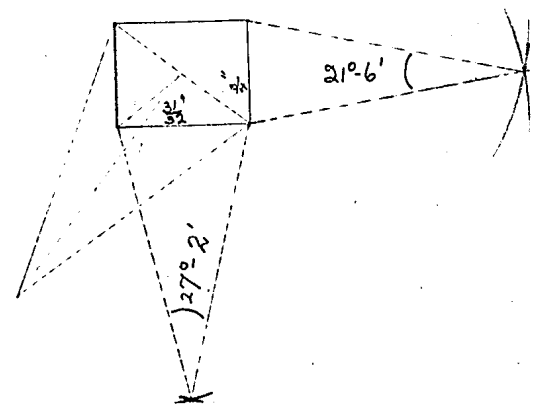
"The amount of light must be sufficient for the photographer to get correct exposure with stop not larger than f.5.5, preferably smaller. "This light should be evenly distributed so that all parts of the stage are equally illuminated and must be more diffused to avoid harsh shadows". "No light, direct or reflected should shine in the camera".

DRESS AND DRAPERY.

"White should never be used, light or canary yellow being the lightest permissable color. The medium shades make best

photographs: "The photographer must bear in mind also that the blues photograph lighter and the reds, darker than they appear to the eye.

ANGLES OF A 2" LENS.



Amplifier Lever Arms
Changes made.

When made by drawings, it appears that the relative distances from center to ball and center to sapphire on amplifier lever arm are not correct and should be as above. To get this distance the ball extension should be cut as shown and bent back until these distances are obtained.

Formula for developers -

EDINOL

Solution A.

Edinol	31 grains.
Sodium Sulphite (dry)	155 "
Water	$3\frac{1}{2}$ oz

Solution B.

Sodium Carbonate (dry)	155 grains
Water	$3\frac{1}{2}$ oz

For plates and Films
1 oz. A - 1 oz B - 2 oz water

For Bromide and Velox Paper
1 oz A - 2 oz B - 3 oz water & sufficient
10% Solution potassium bromide to keep
whites clear

More A than B increases contrast.
More B " A " softness.
Underexposures - 1 oz A - 1 oz B without diluting
Over exposures - Restrain with few drops
of acetone sulphite 50% solution.

Bronx Studio Trials

Miss L.Bourne-	Edison gets 20% only Hayes gets only 30%		N.G.
Miss Viola Knott	Edison 40% Hayes 50%	Explosive-uneven	N.G.
Fred. Roland	Hayes 60% Edison 40%	Poor phone voice -Explosive	N.G.
Lawlence Atdhonson	Hayes 50% Edison 50%	Uneven-unatural -Explosive- Not Good	

C B Hayes 5/21/12

Hayes.

Record of Recording
Quality of Victors Voices
from Mr. Edison's Record.

FEMALE

① Lanna Bennett: Tel 3388 Audubon
705 - W 170th St - New York
= Perfect articulation: Edison and Hayes
= Best ever heard". Edison.

② Alice Knowland
Fort Lee, N.J. - Tel 397 M. Fort Lee.
Hayes 100% - Edison 95% OK

Mr. Kennedy-

The following two singers have been passed for the disc
Mr. Edison remarks that they would be good for kinetophone-

John C. Thomas- Baritone- (Olympic Park Opera Co)
Fine articulation-
Albert Farrington- High Baritone- 220 Wadsworth Ave- N. Y. City-
Good articulation-

C. B. Hayes- 8/14/14-

③ Miss Marjorie Ellison
311 W. 94th St., - Rel 5015 Riverside
New York, N.Y.

Pierman 100% - Hayes 100% - Edison 90%
"Her hissing consonants are pretty strong and think they will go thru our process".

Higham used her for first time 2/20/14.

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④ Laura Dean
311 W - 55th St, New York, N.Y.

Edison 90%, Hayes, all.
"Cracked vaudeville voice", "OK for comic parts". "Voice will come pretty well on Kineto".

(5) Nellie Grant
c/o Edison Studio
New York City

Edison 80% - Hayes all.
"She is pretty good".
Used in The Redemption
Which Shall It Be
Dutch Courage
The Redstrongs
Jacks Joke
Hero Worship
The Burglar
The Bridge Secret
Six Cylinder Elopement

Mrs Robert Webb Lawrence
253 - W. 56th St. N.Y. City.
Phone 127 Columbus.

MALE

① Ben T. Wilson
c/o Edison Studio, New York City.
"all 100%". "This man is O.K."

② Chic Bernham - Comic Opera Comedian
231 W. 52d St New York City.
"Perman, Hayes myself get 100%". OK

③ Edward J Peel
211 W. 109th St New York City
Perman 100%, Hayes 100%; Edison 100%
OK for talking

④ Jerome J Shine
38 Broadway, Hotel Normandie, New York City.
Hayes 100%, Berg 100%, Edison 100%
OK for talking.

(5) Bob. Lett 96 Washington St. N. Orange
~~381 - E 200St New York City~~
Peerman 100%, Hayes 100%, Edison 95% OK
Have used him a number of times

(6) Walter Cluxton.
334 W. 46th St. N. Y. Telephone 3967 Bryant
Hayes, 100%, Edison 95% OK

(7) Henry Norman,
249 W. 34th St New York City
Hayes 100%, Bing 100% Edison 95%
OK for Talking

(8) Harry Knowles Phone
470 W. 146th St New York, City. 3910 Audubon
Hayes, 100% - Bing 95% - Edison 95%
OK for talking

C151J

(9) Louis DeMuck
492 Pine St, Providence R.I.
Hayes 100%, Edison 98%
"Singing only fair - has tremolo - but singing articulation fair - OK for talking - - possibly for singing certain things but not in chorus as tremolo spoils chorus work".

(10) Bernhardt Ruemayer - Comedian
219 E 52nd St - N.Y.
Pierman & Hayes 100%. Edison 90% OK

(11) W. B. Wainright
253 W-55th St New York City
Pierman 100%, Hayes 100%, Edison 90% OK
Regular Edison Studio actor. Has played in talkies".

(12) E. J. Cochran (Corcoran)
Elk Club, New York City
Hayes 100%, Bing 90%, Edison 90%. Pretty fair

(13) Louis Arnold
122 W 49th St. Hale Bustic-New York City
Pearman 100% - Hayes 100% - Edison 90%
OK for talking

(14) Herbert Brooke
1949-63d St., Brooklyn, N.Y. Tel 680 Bath Beach
Edison 90% - Hayes All. "Pretty Train Voice".

(15) Siegfried Von Shulz | Brown Studio.
Phone 9995 Columbus
Hayes 100% - Berg 100% - Edison 75% - pretty good -

(16) C. Dunsby
205 W. 107th St New York. Tel 1002 Riverside
1st part reading natural voice E 100% - H 100%
2d " reciting E 25% - H 60% - Stage Voice N. G. -

Robert Melville Lawrence
253 - W - 55th NY City.
127 Columbus.

C. J. McCormack,
805 Ave O
Brooklyn, N. Y.
Phone 5868 Nuldewood.

George Winter,
58 Clark St
Glen Ridge, N. J.
Record = 9857.
Mr. E says "Lee Dutchison here is a fine singer for Kinetophone". "This man has fine articulation".

John. C. Thomas, Baritone (Opera Co.) Olympic Park
"Fine Articulation" - Edison
Good for Kinetophone - Edison

Albert Farrington - High Baritone
220 Wadsworth Ave., N.Y. City.
"Good Articulation" Edison
Good for Kinetophone Edison.

Opera Singers at
Century Opera House.

Female

Lois Ewell. Soprano. Good voice.
Very pretty. Acts natural
and well. Not flirty.

Kathleen Howard - Contralto. Good voice
Showed record well. Handsome
Acts dignified and well.

Emma Clay - Soprano - Fair voice
Saw as Aida. Could not judge
looks. Acting only fair

Marguerite Sullivan - Contralto - Once
good in spots - at higher range.
Large woman. Not especially
good looking or good acting.

Bertha Shalek - Soprano - Good voice
Fairly good looking. Not
good acting. Shake her
head too much

Florence Coughlan - Soprano - Rich voice but probably would not record well. Mouth poorly shaped and will not be able to enunciate correctly.

Cordelia Latham - Contralto - Fair voice. Not especially pretty. Stiff in acting.

Jayne Herbert - Contralto - Good Voice - Good looks & figure acts natural & well

Fay Scott - Soprano - Fair Voice Fair looking. Good acting

Singers at Century
Opera House
Male.

Morton Adkins - Baritone - Good voice
and excellent enunciation.
Large man. Good actor

Orville Harrold - Tenor - Good voice.
Looks & acts well

Louis Kreidler - Baritone - Fair Voice
. Looks fair. Acts well

Thomas Chalmers - Baritone - Good Voice
Looks well - acts well

James Damon - Tenor - Fair voice
appearance & acting

Walter Wheatley - Tenor - Good Voice
appearance & acting

① Signor Manuel Carvallo (Portuguese)
263 Pearl St., Brooklyn, N.Y.
Phone 98 Main.
Made Dia. #10 - Apr 27/14.

② Mrs. Robert Lett,
90 Washington St.
West Orange, N.J.
Made Dia #10 - Apr 28/14

③ Miss Dorothy Kennedy
W. R. Wainright
With Stock Company, Orange, N.J.
Hotel Plaza.
Made with Dia. #10 - May 10/14.

④ Ed. M. Favor
346 E 3d St. Brooklyn, N.Y.
Phone Flatbush 8661.
Diaphragms ① #10 - ② #12
May 13/14.

⑤ James P. Palich,
64 Belmont Ave, Newark.
Diaphragm #10 - May 13/14.

(151)

⑥ Tests of talking for A. G. Bell.
Diaphragms ① #10 - ② #2
May 5/14.